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SEASONABLE SPEECH

MADE

By a worthy Member of PARLIAMENT in the House of
COMMONS.

Concerning the Other House.

~~March~~ 1689.

Mr. Speaker,

THis daies Debate is but too clear a proof that we Englishmen are right Islanders, Variable and Mutable like the Air we live in. For (sir) if that were not our temper, We should not be now Disputing, Whether after all those hazards we have run, That blood we have spilt, That Treasure We have exhausted, we should not now sit down, just where we did begin; and of our own accords submit our selves to that Slavery, which we have not only ventured our Estates and Lives, but I wish I could not say, Our Souls and Consciences, to throw off. What others (sir) think of this Levity, I cannot tell; I mean those that steer their Consciences by occasions, and cannot lose the honour they never had: But truly (sir) for my own part, I dare as little not declare it to be my Opinion, as others more prudent dare avow it to be theirs, That we are this day making good all the reprehences of our Enemies, owning of our selves Oppressors, Murderers, Regicides, subverters of that, which now we do not only acknowledge to have been a lawful Government, but by recalling it, confess it now to be the best: Which (sir) if it be true, and that now we begin to see aright, I heartily wish, our eyes had been sooner open; and for three Nations sake, that we had purchas'd our Conviction at a cheaper rate. We might (sir) in forty two, have been, what we thus contend to be in Fifty nine; and our Consciences have had much less to answer for to God, and our Reputations to the World.

But, Mr. Speaker, I wish with all my soul, I did state our Case to you amiss, and that it were the question only, whether we would voluntarily relapse into the Disease we were formerly p^{er}ssed with, and of our own accords take up our old yoke, that we wish wearing and custome had made habitual and easy and which (it may be) 'twas more our wantonness then our pressure, that made us throw it off. But this (sir) is not now the Question; that which we deliberate, is not, whether we will say we do not care to be free, we like our old Masters, and will now be content to have our ears bored at the door post of their house, and to serve them for ever; But (sir) as if we were contending for shame as well as servitude, we are carrying our Ears to be bored at the doors of another House: A House (sir) without Name, and therefore it is but congruous it should consist of Members without family: A House that inverts the Order of slavery, and subjects it to our servants; and yet, in contradiction

tradition to Scripture, we do not only not think that subjection intolerable, but are now pleading for it. In a word, Sir, it is a House of so incongruous and odious a composition and mixture, that certainly the grand Architect would never have so framed it, had it not been his design as well to shew to the world the contempt he had of us, as to demonstrate the power he had over us.

Sir, That it may appear, that I intend not to be so prudent (as far as my part is concerned) as to make a voluntary Resignation of my Liberty and Honour to this excellent part of his late Highness his last Will and Testament, I shall crave (sir) the leave to declare in a few particulars my Opinion of this Other House: wherein I cannot but promise myself to be favourably heard by some, but patiently heard by all: For those Englishmen that are against this House, will certainly with content hear the Reasons why others are so too; those Courtiers that are for it, give me evidence enough to think that in nature there is nothing which they cannot willingly endure.

First, sir, As to the Author and Framers of this House of Peers; Let me put you in mind, it was He, that with reiterated Oaths, had often sworn to be true and faithful to the Government without it: and not only sworn so himself, but had been the chief Instrument both to draw and compel others to swear so too. So sir, that the foundation of this Noble Fabrick was laid in Perjury, and was begun with the violation and contempt, as well of the Laws of God, as of the Nation. He sir, that call'd Monarchy Antichristian in another, & indeed made it so in himself: He that voted a House of Lords dangerous and unnecessary, & too truly made it so in his Partisans: He that with fraud and force deprived you of your Liberty when he was living, & enrailed Slavery upon you at his death: 'tis He sir, that hath left you these worthy Overseers of that his last will and Testament; Who, however they have behaved themselves in other trusts, we may be confident they will endeavour faithfully to discharge themselves in this. In a word sir, had this Other House no other fault but its institution and Author, I should think that original sin enough for its condemnation: For I am of their opinion that think, that for the good of Example, all Acts and Monuments of Tyrants are to be Expunged, and Erased, that if possible their memory might be no longer liv'd than their carcasses. And the truth is, their good Laws are of the number of their Snares, and but base Brokage for our Liberty.

But Sir, to impute to this other House no other faults but its own, you may please in the first place to consider of the power which his Highness hath left it, according to that humble Petition & Advice, which he was pleas'd to give order to the Parliament to present unto him. For sir, as the Romans had Kings, so had his Highness Parliaments amongst his Instruments of Slavery: And I hope sir, it will be no offence for me to pray that his Son may not have them so too. But sir, they have a Negative Voice, and all other circumstances of that Arbitrary Power, which made the former House intolerable; only the Dignity and Quality of the persons themselves is wanting, that our slavery may be accompanied with ignominy and affront. And now M. Speaker, have we not gloriously vindicated the Nations Liberty? have we not worthily employed our Blood and Treasure to abolish that Power that was set over us by the Law, to have the same impos'd upon us without a Law? And after all that sound and noise we have made in the world, of the peoples Le-

gislative Power, and of the Supremacy and Omnipotency of their Representatives; we now see there is no more power left them, but what is put in the ballance, and equalled by the power of a few retainers of Tyranny, who are so far from being of the peoples choice, that the most part of them are only known to the Nation by the Villanies and miscelies they have committed in it.

In the next place, sir, you may please to consider that the persons invested with this power, are all of them nominated and designed by the Lord Protector (for to say, *by him and his Council*, hath in effect no more distinction, than if one should say, *by Oliver, and Cromwel*.) By this means the Protector himself, by his own and his Peers Negative, becomes in effect two of the three Estates; and by consequence, is posselt of two parts of the Legislative Power. I think this can be a doubt to no man, that will but take the pains to read over that fair Catalogue of those Noble Lords: for certainly no man that reads their names, can possibly fancy for what other vertues or good qualities such a composition should be made choice of, but only the certainty of their compliance with whatsoever should be enjoyned them by their Creator. (Pardon sir, that name, for 'tis properly applyable, where things are made of *Nothing*.) Now sir, if in the former Government, entcrease of Nobility was a grievance, because the New Nobility, having fresh obligation to the Crown, were the easilier led to compliance with it: And if one of the main Reasons for Exclusion of the Bishops out of the House of Lords was because that they being of the Kings making, were in effect so many certain Votes for whatever the King had a mind to carry in that House: how much more assured will that inconvenience now be, when the Protector, that wants nothing of the King, but, in every sense the Title, shall not only make and nominate a part, but of himself constitute the whole House? In a word sir, if our Liberty was endangered by the former House, we may give it lost in the Other House: And 'tis in all respects as advantageous and secure for the Liberty of the Nation, which we come hither to redeem, to allow this power and notion to his Highness Officers, or Council, nay his very Chaplains, as to his other creatures and Parisians in his Other House.

Now having considered sir, their Author, Power, and constitution, give me leave to make some few Observations, though but in general, of the Persons themselves that are design'd to be our Lords and Masters; and let us see what either the extraordinary quality or qualifications are of these egregious Legislators, which may justify their choice, and prevail with the People to admit them, at least, into equal Authority with the whole Representative body of themselves. But what I shall speak sir, of their quality, or any thing else concerning them, I would be thought to speak with distinction, and to intend only of the Major part. For I acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, the mixture of this other House to be like the Compositions of Apothecaries, who are us'd to mix something of relish, something grateful to the Taste, to quallifie their bitter Drugs, which else, perchance, would be immediately spit out and never swallowed.

So (sir) His Highness, of deplorable memory to this Nation, to countenance as well the want of quality as honesty in the rest, hath nominated some, against whom there lies no other Reproach, but only that Nomination; but not (sir) out of any respect to their Qualities, or regard to their Virtues, but with regard to the no Quality, to the no Virtues of the rest: which truly (Mr. Speaker) if he had not done, we could easily have given a more express Name to his Other house, then he hath been pleased to do. For we know a house desin'd only for Beggars and Malefactors, is a *House of Correction*, and term'd so by your Law. But Mr. Speaker, setting those few Persons aside, who I hope think the Nomination a disgrace, and the ever coming to sit there, much a greater: Can we without Indignation think on the rest? He that's first in their Roll, a condemn'd Coward, one that out of fear and baseness did what he could to betray your Liberties, and does now the same for gain. The second, a Person of as little sense as honesty, prefer'd for no other reason but his no Worth, his no Conscience; except that his cheating his Father of all he had, was thought a Virtue, by him, who by sad Experience, we find hath done as much for his Mother, his Countrey. The third, a Cavalier, a Presbyterian, an Independent; for a Republique, for a Protector, for every thing, for nothing, but only that one thing, *Money*. 'twere endless to run through them all, to tell you (sir) of their Lordships of seventeen pound Land a year of Inheritance of their Farmer Lordships, Dray men Lordships, Cobler Lordships, without one foot of Land, but what the blood of Englishmen hath been the price of: these (sir) are to be our Rulers, these the Judges of our Lives and Fortunes; to these we are to stand bare, whilst their Pageant state Lordships daign to give us a conference upon their Breeches. Mr. Speaker, we have already had too much experience, how unsupportable servants are, when they become our Masters. All kind of slavery is miserable in the accompt of all generous Minds; but that which comes accompanied with scorn and contempt, stirs every Mans Indignation, and is indured by none, whose Nature does not intend for slaves, as well as Fortune.

I say not this (Mr. Speaker) to revile any man with his meanness; for I never thought either the Malignity or Indulgence of Fortune to be (with wise or just men) the grounds either of their ill or their good Opinion. Mr. Speaker, I blame not in these Men the faults of their Fortune, any otherwise but as they make them their own: I object to you their Poverty, because it is accompanied with Ambition; I mind you of their Quality, because they themselves forget it. So that 'tis not the Men I am angry with, but with their Lordships; not with Mr. Barkstead, or Mr. Gouler (Titles I could well allow him) but with *The Right Honourable, our singular good Lord and Gouler*: 'Tis this incongruity (Mr. Speaker) I am displeased with.

So sir, that though we easily grant Poverty and Necessity to be no faults, yet we must allow them to be great Impediments in the way of honour and such as nothing but extraordinary Virtue and Merit can well remove. The Scripture reckons it among *Jeroboams* great faults, that he made Priests of the meanest of the people; and sure it was none of the Virtues of our *Jeroboam* (who hath let up his Calves too, and would have our Tribes come up and worship them) that he observed the same Method, in making of Lords.

One of the few Requests the Portugals made to Philip the second of Spain, when he got that Kingdome (as his late Highness did this) by an Army was, *That he would not make Nobility contemptible, by advancing such to that Degree, whose quality or vertue could be no way thought to deserve it.* Nor have we formerly been less apprehensive of such inconveniencies our selves: it was in Ric. 1's time, one of the Bishop of Ely's Accusations, that Castles and Forts of trust he did *Obscuris & ignotis hominibus tradere*, put in the hands of obscure and unknown men: But We (*Mr. Speaker*) to such a kind of Men are delivering up the Power of our Laws, and in that the power of All.

In the 17 Edw. 4. there past an Act of Parliament, for the degrading of John Nevil Marquess Mountague and Duke of Bedford; the reason exprest in the Act, *Because he had not a revenue sufficient for the maintaining of that Dignity; to which he added, That when men of mean Birth are called to high Estate, and have no livelihood to support it, it induceth Briberies, Extortions, and all kind of injustices that are followed by gain.* And in the Parliament of 2 Carol. the Peers in a Petition against Scotch and Irish Titles, told the King, *That 'tis a Novelty without Precedent, That Men should possess Honours, where they possess nothing else; and that they should have a Vote in Parliament, where they have not a foot of Land.* But if it had been added, *Sir, Or have no Land but what is the purchase of their Villanies,* against how many of our new Peers had this been an important Objection? To conclude sir, it hath been a very just and reasonable care, amongst all Nations, not to render that despis'd and contemptible to the People, which is design'd for their Reverence, and their Awe: Which sir, bare an empty Title, without quality or vertue, never procur'd any man, any more than the Image in the Fable made the As adored that carryed it.

After their quality, give me leave, sir, to speak a word or two of their qualifications; which certainly ought in reason to carry some proportion with the employments they design themselves. The House of Lords, sir, are our Kings Hereditary great Councils: they are the Highest Court of Judicature; they have their part in judging and Determining of the Reasons of making new Laws, and of abrogating old: From amongst them we take our great Officers of State; they are commonly our Generals at Land, and our Admirals at Sea: In conclusion, Sir, they are both of the Essence and Constitution of our old Government; and have besides the greatest and noblest share in the Administration. Now certainly, Sir, to judge according to the Dictates of Reason, one would imagine some small Faculties and Endowments to be necessary for the discharging of such a Calling; and those such as are not usually acquired in shops and ware-houses, nor found by following the Plough: Now what other Academies most of their Lordships have been bred in, but their shops; what other Arts they have been versed in, but those which more require good Arms and good Shoulders than good Heads, I think *M. Speaker* we are yet to be informed. Sir, we commit not the Education of our Children to Ignorant and Illiterate Masters; Nay, we trust not our very Horses to unskilful Grooms: I beseech you Sir, let Us think it belongs to Us, to have some Care into whose Hands we commit the management of the Common-wealth: And if we cannot have persons of

of Birth and Fortune to be our Rulers, to whose quality we would willingly submit; I beseech you sir, for our Credits and Safeties sake, let us seek men (at least) of Parts and Education, to whose Abilities we may have some Reason to give way. If sir, a Patient dies under a Physicians hand, the Law esteems that not a Felony, but a misfortune in the Physician; but if one that is no Physician undertakes the management of a Cure, and the Party miscarryes; the Law makes the Emperique a Felon, and sure in all mens opinion the Patient a Fooll. To conclude, sir, for Great men to Govern 'tis ordinary: for Able Men 'tis natural; Knaves many times come to it by Force and Necessity, and Fools sometimes by Chance: But universal Choice and Election of Fools and Knaves for Government, was never yet made by any who were not themselves like those they chose.

But methinks Mr. Speaker, I see ready to rise after me, some Gentleman that shall tell you the great Services their new Lordships have done the Commonwealth; that shall extol their Valour, their Godliness, their Fidelity to the Cause; The Scripture too (no doubt) as 'tis to all purposes, shall be brought in to Argue for them; and we shall hear of the Wisdom of the poor man that saved the City, of the not many wise, not many mighty; Attributes I can no way deny to be due to their Lordships. Mr. Speaker, I shall be as forward as any man to declare their Services; and acknowledge them; though I might tell you, that the same honour is not purchas'd by the blood of an Enemy, and of a Citizen; that for Victories in civil Wars, till our Armies march through the City, I have not read that the Conquerours have been so void of shame as to Triumph. Caesar, not much more indulgent to his Countrey, then our late Protector, did not so much as write publique Letters of his Victory at Pharsalia, much less had daies of Thanksgiving to his gods, and Anniversary Feasts for having been a prosperous Rebel, and given Justice and his Countrey the worst.

But sir, I leave this Argument, and to be as good as my word, come to put you in mind of some of their services, and the obligation you owe them for the same. To speak nothing sir, of one of my Lords Commillioners valour at *Bristol*, nor of another Noble Lords brave adventure at the Bear-garden; I must tell you sir, that most of them have had the courage to do things, which (I may boldly say) few other Christians durst have so adventured their souls to have attempted: They have not only subdued their Enemies, but their Masters, that raised and maintained them; they have not only Conquered *Scotland* and *Ireland*, but *Rebellious England* too; and there suppress'd a Malignant Party of Magistrates and Laws. And that nothing should be wanting to make them indeed compleat Conquerours, (without the help of Philosophy) they have even Conquered themselves. All shame they have subdued, as perfectly as all Justice; the Oaths they have taken, they have as easily digested, as their old General could himself; publique Covenants and Engagements, they have trampled under foot: In conclusion so intire a Victory they have over themselves, that their Consciences are as much their servants, as *Mr. Speaker*, we are. But sir, give me leave to conclude with that which is more admirable then all this, and shews the confidence they have of themselves and us: After having many times trampled on

on the Authority of the House of Commons, and no less then five times dissolv'd them, they hope for those good services to the House of Commons, by the House of Commons to be made a House of Lords. I have been over-long sir, for which I crave your pardon; therefore in a word I conclude. I beseech you let us think it our duty to have a care of two things: First that Villanies be not encouraged with the rewards of Vertue: Secondly, That the Authority and Majesty of the Government of this Nation be not defiled, and exposed to contempt, by committing so considerable a part of it to Persons of as mean Quality as Paris.

The *Thebans* did not admit Merchants into Government, till they had left their Traffique ten years: sure 'twould have been long before Coblers and Dray-men would have been allowed. If sir the wisdom of this House shall find it necessary to begin where we left, and shall think we have been hitherto like the Prodigal, and that now when our necessities perswade us (*i. e.*) that we are almost brought to herd it with Swine, now 'tis high time to think of a return; Let us without more ado, without this motly mixture, eventake our *Rulers as at the first*, so that we can be but reasonably secured to avoid our *Counsellours as at the beginning*.

Give me leave sir, to release your Patience with a short Story. *Livy* tells us, There was a State in *Italy*, an Aristocracy, where the Nobility stretch their Prerogative too high, and presumed a title too much upon the Peoples Liberty and Patience; whereupon the discontents were so general and so great, that they apparently tended to a dissolution of Government, and the turning of all things into Anarchy and Confusion. At the same time, besides these distempers at home, there was a potent Enemy ready to fall upon them from abroad, that had been an over-match for them, at their best Union, but now in these disorders, was like to find them very ready and very easy prey: A wise man sir, in the City, that did not at all approve of the insolency of the Nobility, and as little liked Popular tumults, but thought himself of this Stratagem, to couzen his Countrey into safety. Upon a pretence of Counsel, he procured the Nobility to meet altogether; which when they had done, he found a way to lock all the doors upon them; goes away himself, and takes the keys with him: Then he immediatly summons the People; tells them that by a contrivance of his, he had taken all the Nobility in a Trap; That now was the time for them to be revenged upon them for all their insolencies; that therefore they should immediately go along with him and dispatch them. Sir, the Officers of our Army after a fast, could not be more ready for the Villany, then this People were; and accordingly they made as much hast to the slaughter as their Lord Protector could desire them. But sir, this wise man I told you of, was their Lord Protector indeed: As soon as he had brought the People where the Parliament was sitting, and when they but expected the word to fall to the Butchery, and take their heads; *Gentlemen*, saies he, *Though I would not care how soon this work of Reformation were over; yet in the Ship of the Commonwealth we must not throw the Steers-men over board, till we have provided others for the Helm: Let us consider before we take these men away, in what other hands we may more securely trust our Liberty, and the management of the Commonwealth.* And so he advis'd them before the putting down of the former, to be think themselves of constituting an Other House.

He begins and nominates one; a man highly cryed up in the Popular Faction; a confiding man, one of much Zeal, little sense, and no quality; you may suppose him, Sir, a zealous Cobler: the People in conclusion murmured at this, and were loath their fellow-Mutineer for no other vertue but Mutining, should come to be advanced to be their Master; and by their looks and murmur sufficiently express the distaste they took at such a motion. Then he nominates another, as mean a mechanic as the former; you may imagine him, Sir, a bustling rude Dray-man, or the like; he was no sooner named, but some burst out a laughing, others grew angry and rayled at him, and all detested and scorn'd him. Upon this a third was named for a Lordship, one of the same batch, and every way fit to fit with the other two. The People then fell into a confused laughter and noise, and enquired if such were Lords, who (by all the Gods) would be content to be the Commons?

Sir, Let me be bold (by the good leave of the Other House and yours) to ask the same Question? But sir to conclude this story, and with it I hope the Other House: when this wise man I told you of, perceived they were now sensible of the inconvenience and mischief they were running into, and saw that the pulling down their Rulers, would prove in the end, but the setting up of their Servants; He thought them then prepar'd to hear Reason; and told them, *You see, faith he, That as bad as this is, we cannot, for any thing I see, agree upon a better: What then, if after this fright we have put our Nobility in, and the demonstration we have given them of our Power, we try them once more, whether they will mend, and for the future behave themselves with more moderation?* That people M. Speaker were so wise as to comply with that wise Proposition, and to think it easier to mend their old Rulers, than to make New. And I wish M. Speaker, we may be so wise to think so too.

F I N I S.